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"CULTURAL SOURCES OF JAPANESE POWER"

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Good afternoon. I see we have a full house with people here from the Intelligence Community as well as the Agency. It is a very great pleasure for all of us to welcome our distinguished speaker, Professor Reischauer, whom all of you know from his many accomplishments and his many writings about the Far East and Japan, in particular. A man who was born of missionary heritage in Japan; a man who has gone on to be one of the leading academic experts of that part of the world; a man who was the U.S. Ambassador to Japan from 1961-1966; a man who needs no more detailed introduction to you but one whom we are very pleased could come here from Harvard University, where he is a professor and has been since 1939; and we are very anxious to hear his words about Japan today. Mr. Reischauer.

Thank you very much, Admiral Turner. Ladies and Gentlemen. It is a great pleasure to be here. I must admit that what really drew me to come this time was the challenging subject that I was assigned. One is normally asked to "tell us about Japan," that is the way it usually goes. Then you say, "Gee, Japan is terribly important, and it is very strong." Then you begin to talk about some reasons for this, and finally you get around to maybe saying some of the sources of great strength that come out of this amazing

country. Instead of that, the title I was given was just the other way around. It said, "Tell us about the cultural sources of Japanese power." I have never had that title before, and I thought, gee, that challenges me. I have got to think about that, and I will come down and try. It is a great big amorphous subject. I may wander around in it a little bit because it doesn't tie itself down too clearly; but I have done some thinking about it. I have some ideas. If I can manage to keep myself to a reasonable amount of time for speaking, we can have some time to discuss the things that I left out or the things I said wrong or the other points you would like to make about it.

Japan is a remarkable country. When you think that it is number three and think in terms of the two countries that it follows to be number three: ourselves--twice the population of Japan and over 20 times the size of Japan, and more than that in terms of resources, is number one; the Soviet Union, well over twice the size of Japan in population and about 40 times as big in terms of size and so on and resources. Then Japan, this tiny little bunch of islands with no special advantages of any sort, comes third in the world. Obviously, it is something in the people, something in them, in their culture, that must explain all of these

things. When you begin to talk about the cultural sources of strength, you also often find out that the things that are the strengths are often also the weaknesses. A virtue carried too far suddenly turns into a vice. Some of the problems we will be talking about are going to be Japan's weaknesses as well as strengths.

I tried to sort out my ideas in four general categories, running from the biggest, and most general down to the smallest, that is, from the sense of a nation, which is point number one, down to the individual as a source of strength, as the smallest unit. This is sort of going from the most obvious down to the least obvious and the most difficult to analyze. First of all, the concept of a nation. Japan's concept of itself, its clear identity as a nation, is obviously one of the cultural sources of Japanese strength. It comes from way back in Japanese history. It is part of the civilization of that part of the world, the Chinese part of the world, the part of the world that got its civilization from ancient China, because that part of the world saw civilization as centering around a political unit. In contrast with India, which saw itself as a great area of a kind of religion; or Western Asia, the Middle East, which is the Islamic world, notice. We identify it by the religion,

or further west than that which is identified as Christiandom, again by a religion. Only in East Asia was a unit specifically the political unit that was the center of civilization, and so it is not surprising that the oldest political units in the world are those of East Asia.

China appeared on the maps of the world that existed at that time as very much what it is today in extent, in people, in language, in basic culture in the third century B.C., and about a thousand years later Korea and Japan became countries number two and three. In the seventh century A.D. they were identified clearly as the present countries that they are. We countries of the West came along very much later than that. Among these three countries of East Asia, there were great differences. The Chinese were so large a unit they saw themselves as the only unit, and this has been a great handicap in modern Chinese history, because it has been very hard for them to accept the rest of the world as really existing. The Koreans always were in the shadow of China, constantly being conquered by China, and they saw themselves as a small imitation of China, but always following in China's footsteps. The Japanese were more isolated out on their islands there. They made themselves another specific unit. They got the concept of a multinational

world and themselves as a clear unit in it. This isolation made for a tremendous amount of homogeneity. This is certainly part of Japan's cultural strength. There has been no significant immigration into Japan since the eighth century. That is more than one thousand years. The only large group of people that have come since then have been the Korean workers that were brought in during World War II, and form a tiny minority in Japan today. The Japanese did not mix in with the rest of the world. During that more than one thousand years, there was only one serious effort to invade Japan, by the Mongols. They got all the way to Europe, but they failed to get to Japan. There has been only one serious effort by the Japanese to go out and conquer the world. That was in the sixteenth century, and they failed. They didn't get past Korea. Japan was off there by herself, and for the two hundred and fifty years before their opening in the mid-nineteenth century, they clearly cut themselves off from the rest of the world in a self-imposed isolation that made them even more homogeneous. Of course, in modern times, with modern education, and then with the mass media, they have done what all the rest of us have done and made themselves even further a homogeneous grouping. This despite the fact that, during most of their history, they were divided up into warring, feudal units of one sort or

another. They have seven hundred years of feudalism, as the West has a long period of feudalism, which means complete divisions of all sorts, but above it all they had this concept of being a political unit derived in part from the Chinese concept; and utilizing the fact that they had in early times an emperor and an imperial line has been useful in keeping alive this concept of being a single unit. The result is here you have the world's probably most homogeneous, large group of people that stretch out over distances vastly larger let's say than the British Isles, and the country even in land area is larger than the British Isles; but there is nothing like the regionalism you will find in the British Isles and the United Kingdom. There is practically no difference from one end to the other end. Only Okinawa way off in the far, far south can be said to be regionally different in any way. Despite the fact that they had feudalism as a complete system, and that means class divisions, they have managed to wipe those out within one hundred years, within three generations, so they aren't divided that way either. We in the West moved away from feudalism over a long, long period of time. The Japanese managed to move away from it much more completely within a century. Now, there are some exceptions to what I have been saying. There is one small group that did not get mixed in with the rest

of the Japanese. A group of people that they call Burakumin; they use to call them the Eta, who because of certain functions in society were considered to be below even the average, the lowest classes, outcasts of a sort. While they have had full legal equality ever since 1871, there still is social discrimination. So you do have a slight exception to the rule there. Today, you have these six hundred thousand Koreans who have been left over from World War II and would be virtually absorbed in the Japan of today if the Japanese didn't keep them from being absorbed. They don't want them to be absorbed because they are Koreans. The Koreans are almost exactly like the Japanese physically. They speak the closest language to Japanese of any other language. The society is close. They could be very easily absorbed and would be virtually disappearing today if the Japanese weren't still holding them off at arm's length. And you have somewhat less than half as many Chinese, mostly merchants and most of them maybe from Taiwan, who again are somewhat kept out. Then there are the others beyond that--the real outsiders--that the Japanese just take for granted couldn't possibly be assimilated. We of the West fall into that category. We are gaijin-outsiders. You could be born in Japan, and no matter what you did, you could not be really a real Japanese, because you are so obviously an outsider

because the world of the Japanese is divided between Japanese and others; and we are very obviously others. Now what is the result of all this, this strong sense of self-identity? Well, it was very helpful at certain times. There was a time when Japan found herself far behind the Western technology because she had shut herself off from the West and had gotten behind in technology. The very fact that no Japanese could conceive of cooperating with the outsiders against Japan, that there was no collaborator class, which has been almost essential to colonialism everywhere else in the world, meant that the Japanese could get through that dangerous period quite successfully. They tried to use Westerners in fights between each other but never in the sense of siding with a Westerner against Japan itself. There is a very, very strong sense of my country right or wrong. They are all going to pull together against the outside world. Even in 1940 when really a very large percentage of the Japanese were distressed by the direction that things were taking, the kind of policies that were being followed, the fact that Japan was getting into a war with the United States; even then, no Japanese did not collaborate with the government once the thing came. It is taken for granted they had to be on that one side. There could be no alternative. This leads to an ability to have a drive for national ends. The

Japanese don't have to have a policy of "Buy Japanese." They have used it actually in certain laws but fundamentally they follow it without it ever being spoken. It is just taken for granted. Of course, you will buy from your company or its group if at all possible. If not from them, then from some other Japanese group. You would only think of buying from outside that if you couldn't find it within Japan. The rest of us have to have a conscious policy of "Buy American" if we are going to do something of that sort. Now, these have been great strengths, getting Japan where she is today; which happens today to turn out to be Japan's greatest weakness, I think. This attitude which they themselves call Shimagumikonjo--a feeling of an island people, an insular feeling, not being part of the world but being outside of it, being onlookers, reactors to the rest of the world because they are in a world in which they have to live by a global economy. The success of world trade is the only hope they have of succeeding and continuing as a nation. So, this tremendously strong sense of self-identification now has become a handicap rather than an asset.

Let's go on to a second point that may not be quite as obvious as the first point. You can have people with a strong self-identity, but they can quarrel with each other tremendously. The Japanese have a great tradition not of

that, a tradition of law and order, cooperation, and organization. I think it comes basically out of the two centuries preceding their period of opening to the West in the middle of the nineteenth century. We talk a lot of that as being the two centuries in moral isolation. There were also the two centuries, more actually two hundred and twenty years, of absolute peace. They had no fight with any outsider of any sort. There was no fight within Japan between any groups. It was a time of complete peace such as no other nation has ever known. During this time everybody knew how the system operated, what the limits were, what you could do, and what you could not do, and so on. In other words, it was a sort of constitutional system even though there was no constitution. It was clear exactly how everything operated, and the Japanese got the habit of assuming that society should be orderly in that way. The periods before that, real feudal times, were not that at all. You all know that well enough from following Japanese movies where they all go around hacking each other to pieces with double-handed swords and so on, but here you had two hundred years, 1638 to 1858, of absolute peace and order. Well, what does that mean? This has meant that the Japanese have been able to go through probably the most rapid and largest changes that any society has been forced to go through during the last hundred and

twenty-five years with an amazingly little amount of disorder. They went from pure feudalism, complete feudalism in the 1850s, to an entirely new system by the 1870s with only very sporadic and limited fighting. During those years of a great transition of systems--social, economic and political--there was only one year in which the tax yields dipped a bit because of disorder. Otherwise, the society as a whole just rolled right through that period and it rolled through changes after that that were almost as great. They set themselves up with a new constitution, a new system in 1889, trying to describe exactly how they thought things should operate. They couldn't devise a system for a changing world, and of course things changed very much and, within that constitution, Japan went through two great changes. It went from a system of a centralized power with very little parliamentary, that is, democratic, power in it. It was a small element, but they went from that to a system that was almost the British parliamentary system. Then they went from that to something that was virtually a military dictatorship, all under the same constitution and without much disorder within the country. There were a few times when there were riots, but so few you can virtually count them on the fingers of one hand. There were some political assassinations, but mostly in the 1930s and not many of them. When you

count them all up, there are really not very many. There is only one thing that came close to being a failed coup d'etat. Otherwise, they made these two really very momentous changes of the system within a 50-year period without breaking step, without losing order. They did the same thing after the war. After the war they had to start over again. A new constitution is written, said to be just a slight emendation of the old one, but actually a new one in its basic principles. People had different ideas of how it should operate--all the way from the Communists at one end to very conservative people on the other end. There was bitter suspicion and fighting between these groups, a great turmoil, and yet no bloodshed of any significant amount. Again, a few murders of possibly political motivation, one could not quite tell, a lot of rioting, but the rioting went on for years and years and years, and it got to be hundred of thousands of people rioting; and yet, the first death only occurred in late 1960 and by accident. Since then a few more deaths and riots have taken place. As compared to the social changes, political changes in other countries, this has been an extremely orderly kind of transition. One of the reasons for this is probably because they hit upon a system, a loyalty to a system rather than dependence upon individual leadership. It is a striking thing about the Japanese.

Probably the last Japanese that was a real personal dictator with real power is the man who founded the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1600 and died in 1600. Since that time there has been nobody of that type. They made the great change from feudalism to a modern centralized state under a group of men who came to be known as the Genro or the elder statesmen. As they got older they were given that title, and not a single one of these men ever made a grab for power for himself. They kept passing it on between each other, trying to do it together as a committee, as a collegial group--in the ways that the Japanese had developed skills for some time. You have them come to the time of the great decision for war with us, and they concentrated a great deal of power at least in theory in the hands of one man, General Tojo, who was not only the head of the Army but also the head of the government as a prime minister, and also took the head of the whole ministry in order to control the police as they went into the war. So you would seem to be having almost a dictator, but he was no dictator; he was a chairman of a committee, you might say, at the very most. When the war went badly and his colleagues felt that maybe he was not as good a leader anymore as they wanted, they would like to try somebody else out, he meekly just walks off the scene and lets the next man try it. After the war, you have one

strong man appearing like a strong prime minister, but he was strong only because he spoke in the name of General MacArthur who from the outside was a very strong man. Prime Minister Yoshida was what they call one man Yoshida, strong man Yoshida that means, merely because of the American occupation that did centralize power. Well, what is the result of this? This means that you have a unified nation that basically sees itself as a unit and yet tends to work together, tries to find a way to cooperate in the directions they are trying to move Japan. In the early Meiji period you have the motto, "A rich nation, a strong military unified under the Emperor as a symbol." That carried them a long way. After that they had their drive for a place in the sun. First, in a military way and that proved too late. You couldn't build empires at that time in history and they failed. Now, they have driven for their place in the sun. They have really found it by pulling together economically because they have all agreed. Japan has to industrialize to live. It has to be more efficient than anybody else. We have to sacrifice everything to economic growth. Up through the 1960s this unified them. Today, it is a little bit more of a problem because it is not quite as clear what it should be that unifies them. I feel they have got to find a new way to keep the world international trade going, a little

bit more sophisticated system than simple free trade, and they, being the best organized people, better find that way or else we are all going to be in trouble because we will have a moment in which they will be looking around trying to find a place for themselves, but they show a great capacity for doing these things.

Let's go to the third category. I have been talking about national reactions. We all know that the Japanese have great social skills, and we know that they are great group people; they are great on group organization. They got this perhaps from the fact of having lived under very crowded conditions for a long period of time. This is probably because of rice agriculture. Rice agriculture does grow more per square foot; it gets a heavier, denser population; it demands the cooperation and the resources of water allocation and things of that sort. You get, therefore, a highly integrated society, much more so then you do in our wheat farming kind of more loosely spread civilization such as we had in the West. Partly nomadic, partly dried field wheat farming, and so on. The Japanese rice cultivation did get a greater kind of density of people and therefore the development of greater skills in living together. This is true again of all of East Asia. The Confucian idea was to subordinate the

self, the individual, to the group. In China this was fundamentally thought of as being the family. In Japan, it was thought of as being a bigger unit than the family because of feudalism--the feudal unit was larger; but in either case you had the ideal of harmony rather than conflict between people. You had the ideal of finding a consensus rather than having confrontations. The interesting thing is that the Japanese have been able to take these skills as they applied them in organizations of pre-modern times, transferred these same skills from those organizations to the organizations of an industrialized society. In pre-modern times, you see these basically as the autonomous village which shared a common water resource and, therefore, had to have a kind of communal life. Eighty percent of the Japanese were farmers living under those conditions in these virtually autonomous villages. You saw it also in the feudal fiefs, where the Daimyo and his retainers, the Samurai, made a group together that shared their fortunes, and in business, where again, it was always a group activity. As the company spread and got branches in different cities, and so on. Today, we see these same skills being shown in modern Japanese industry. Most clearly, perhaps, in the organization of a great Japanese industrial enterprise, which is basically made up of permanent leadership and management class, and a

permanent labor group. Both of them join the company for life. The one group, through rigorous examinations, to get the best possible people out of college to be in this company for life. The other group chosen, again on the basis of educational qualifications and other personality qualifications, also, to be workers for life. They stay together in this way as a unit. You see it in other institutions, too. The Japanese Government is made up very much that way. The ministries are lifetime employment. People join the Finance Ministry, the most prestigious one, by passing a very rigorous examination, or after graduating from the university. They start at the lowest rank and then move up in that ministry all their life until, if they are lucky and are good, they may reach the top post of vice minister. Very much the way a man might join management in a company and move up through age until he becomes the president of the company. But in all other aspects of Japanese society, you see the same kind of group organization and group feeling. Now, what does this do? It produces all sorts of great skills. For one thing, as we all know, there is a very low level of disruptive strikes in Japan because while Japanese labor is organized into unions, the unions are unions by the different companies to which they belong. They are divided in that way. They have deep interest in that company as a competitive unit in the Japanese economy.

The last thing in the world they want to do is to hurt that company. Therefore, when they strike, they strike not in a disruptive way; they strike in a symbolic way. That is why you have your strike before working hours in the morning. Soon as working hours come, you take down the red flags, take off the red arm bands, all the rest of that and go away and work. You flexed your muscles; you have shown what you've got. This is part of the bargaining process with management, and it works very well. Because management is very much interested in the loyalty and support of its workers. So the two see themselves as part of the same group. They get a great deal of self-identification, a sense of pride, a sense of belonging--psychologically very rewarding in many ways, as well as showing a great deal of self-interest. It is one of the reasons why the Japanese will work so hard. They are proud of their companies, whether they are management or labor. They don't need quality control from the outside. The man on the line is the best quality-control man you could possibly have because he wants to be sure that Datsun or Toyota does not slip through in any slipshod way. He wants it to be as perfect as possible. You can't get anything better than that. This is part of what? The great Japanese work ethic. The fact that they so identify with their work group. This skill in group organization also carries over into the consensus

decision making. To avoid decisions that seem to be by fiat, by the man on top saying it will be this way and the rest saying yes, yes and following. That is not the Japanese concept of what leadership should be. You take a ministry; they are all part of the same team. The younger man can't pass the older man because they are all on the same escalator of advances by age. Therefore, there is no danger for an older man to have a younger man with bright ideas. It is the system that pulls the good ideas out of all age groups. You would be amazed at how freely the younger man in the company or in the ministry in government will talk before his seniors because he is accepted as being a member of the team. He has no fear of his head being chopped off nor does the man above him have the fear that this guy is going to leapfrog him if he proves to be too brilliant, and so on. You get, I think, a better general utilization of personnel in this way. Decisions by consensus, when the whole group gets in on it, are said to be slow. If you look at how slow our decisions are in this country, you wonder sometimes if they could be slower. On the whole it is said to be slower than when one man can make a decision, but you wonder, if on the whole, they aren't probably sounder. Because there have been more who have really taken part in this decision-making process. There can be no doubt about it, that these decisions

when made are very well understood. So they are carried out probably much more effectively than the decision that comes down from on high. The decision is, therefore, much more likely to stick. It's a skill carried over from the earlier periods to modern times and not through actual institutions who live through this way. These are new institutions. The Japanese began to develop these things after 1900 mostly. You see the growth mostly in the 1920s-1930s, and since the war. But these are the same skills of discipline displayed in earlier times and proved to be useful ones today. They are the skill of decisions through negotiation between different groups. The groups are very solid; you have a danger, therefore, of clash between groups. You find that in the government bureaucracy, but they do their best to find a way to come to a consensus through negotiation in one form or another. So most of the decision-making is often going on out of sight in private discussions before it ever comes out in public. You do your best to limit the area of debate, the area of confrontation as much as possible by getting most decisions made by this consensus procedure of unofficial negotiation in advance. You see this happening in the Japanese Government all the time. That's the way it works as smoothly as it does. It doesn't seem to be smooth to us, because a few points that could not be decided are

the ones that always reach the floor of the Japanese Parliament and then there is confrontation because it has been decided that there is going to be confrontation over it. Ninety percent of the stuff has already been decided in advance and that goes through very smoothly without any fight whatsoever. You can have times such as you have now where the majority party, which is gradually losing its majority position, is now such a slim majority that it no longer controls the committees in either of the two houses. You see them gradually moving into a kind of coalition system with no problem whatsoever. Because they are having a private negotiation with the other parties, particularly those nearest the majority party and in a sense there is already an informal coalition government in Japan. If the size of the liberal democratic party should further erode, then it will probably turn into a formal coalition or readjustment of party names in order to get a new majority that can run the system. We all are aware of the skills the Japanese have used in cooperation between government and business. Now, there are other reasons in the early history, your more modern history, where government had to take a leading role to sponsor industry in an effort to catch up with the West that was a couple of centuries ahead of Japan in technology; thus part of the story, a story that is so very

different from our own history of industrialization and economic development. But in any case, the Japanese have special skills of coordination between business and government, whereas we have the general concept of conflict between the two. The Japanese business groups are well organized. The different areas of Japanese industry such as steel, electric power, or whatever it might be are in groups that try to get a meeting of the minds of the major companies. These are put together in larger organizations and most important is a Keidanren that can speak pretty well for big business as a whole. The Japanese Ministries are working together to try to find areas of agreement on problems on which they might disagree. And then both sides--business, the government bureaucracy, and the politicians are negotiating together to get a general position that they can all follow. This is what they did in their great rise to economic power in the late 1950s and the 1960s, a general consensus that they all shared, in fact, the whole Japanese nation shared. You get this combination of a country in which the government gives kind of administrative guidance in various ways to business and in this sense helps shape and helps direct the macro economy, but the micro economy remains very bitterly competitive. So you get the best of both systems. A certain degree of planning, with a great deal of competition, which

is probably the most efficient of the economic systems in the world.

I have left for last, again I see I am running out of time, the final and the most difficult area and that is the individual. Because the picture I have painted for you could be a picture of the human ant. They all see themselves as a great nation, a great nation that goes together, that groups together in groups that are very distinct and operates in that way rather than as individuals. The human ant par excellence, and we sometimes see the Japanese in those terms. We can't understand what they are saying, what they are doing, how diverse they actually are, how deep the disagreements and disputes may be that are going on. We see them as tourists abroad, and somebody has a flag and they all are immediately following the leader with the flag as they go around and see the world, and so on. This is a picture we can very easily get of them. Yet at the same time, if that's all it was, you wouldn't have the nation that Japan is by any means. There is tremendous individual drive. Have they per capita just as much, may be more, individual drive for personal achievement in Japan as we have in our country where we put such great emphasis upon the individual. You have the great entrepreneurs. Mitsui, one of the great entrepreneurs, goes back to the seventeenth

century. When they opened Japan, they all tried to get--- this great outburst of entrepreneurial activities, Mitsubishi etc., name after name of great entrepreneurs of that age. After World War II, there is another period when things were changed. There was a new beginning and you get the whole appearance of great entrepreneurs--Matsushita, etc. these are names you have heard I am sure: Honda, Toyota, (Sony is not a Japanese name, there are two men behind it Morita and _____,) and so on, and on, and on. Men of great individual personal drive. Not only they, you have in the fields, the creative, aesthetic fields, the great many authors who are all individuals. The great musicians--Ozawa who conducts our Boston Symphony and so on, artists, architects, explorers. Who is it who goes to the North Pole alone? The first man to do it was Japanese. Who is it that sails around as a family around the world in a 15 foot yacht or something like that? You know you find the Japanese and the English as the two groups who go for that kind of crazy activity. These aren't human ants by any means. They have all these individual drives. All the millions of Japanese who are determined to excel in education, where the feeling is, if I just try hard enough, there is nothing that I cannot do. Nothing more maddening about the Japanese actually than that particular point. The Japanese will keep saying I will try a little harder, and then I am sure I can do it. He just sees no limits to what

he can do if he just tries hard enough. He doesn't realize he doesn't really have it in some cases. They all have this great work ethic that they've got to work hard. They enjoy their work. They want to achieve something, and so on. What does all this thing come from? Well, in terms of being different from the people around them--this is much tied up with Japanese feudalism, I think. The fact that the land was divided into feudal classes; you could only achieve certain things; you couldn't get out of your class; and you got a goal-oriented society rather than a status-oriented society you had in most traditional areas. This may be part of it. I think our own drive in this way, what they used to call the Protestant ethic, may be really derived from the left-overs of feudalism and class divisions and things of that sort in some of the same way. In any case, the Japanese reacted to the outside world very differently from any other people. They had 265 different feudal domains, each one reacting when the West came. Six percent of the population was Samurai, all feeling they had some right to leadership of some kind. You had the villages, and notice I used the word before "autonomous villages." Those villages were autonomous. They paid taxes, they followed the law, but they ran their own affairs. You had the merchant class who knew what they could do. They could never become Samurai

but within the limits allowed them they could become very rich and successful merchants. You had all these groups that were willing to react to new opportunities. So you get these explosions of entrepreneurships when new opportunities arise. You also have, I think, that drive that finally made Japan the one non-Western nation that has definitely become a pretty stable, successful democracy. One of the most successful, because six percent of the population of Samurai thought they had the right to participate in government and pretty soon the peasants and the merchants who paid the taxes thought why shouldn't we too have a share in it? And you had the Japanese moving on their own towards democracy, which they have finally achieved, I think, with great success. This makes them thoroughly different from the people around them, the other traditional societies, but not very different from us. What makes them perhaps even harder eager beavers than we are.

One thing I'll bring up, and I do so rather with doubts because I am way over my depth at this point. I may have been over my depth through much of this, but certainly I am at this point, is the secure family environment. The Japanese family remains intact. Through most of history, it was not the extended family of Chinese ideal, and of upper classes in Japan. Through most of history it was the

conjugal family, father, mother, and children; or you might call it the stem family because father and mother would have children. One son only could inherit the farm that was so small. So he would stay there with the old pair as they grew older with his wife and raise new children. You have this stem of one family going down that way. That same pattern still exists; that family is not eroded. The Japanese grows up in a family that has a lot more cohesion than an American family does today. The Japanese child is, not almost smothered, but he is lavished by love by his mother. Father spends so much time commuting to work across town, two hours and back, he hardly ever sees him except on weekends. So he doesn't count so much. But mother lavishes her love on the child. This produces, particularly among the boys, sort of a spoiled-boy syndrome. Grown-up Japanese men sometimes are so dependent on their wives and are still in a sense spoiled boys in that way. The same time you have another syndrome: the child that feels secure; there is tremendous love and faith. Everybody said: he can do it in school, he is going to succeed. The family expects him to do it. He has confidence in himself. I think out of that kind of family you get these people who are so sure that, if they just try hard enough, they will do it. As I said, I am over my depth in this one. This one needs more analysis, but I am sure that there is something very important there.

There is another thing, the high value placed on education. This again has a Chinese background; maybe the difficulty of the Chinese writing system put a higher value on the literate arts in this part of the world than anywhere else. In any case, you always had more emphasis on these things, on being able to read and write in East Asia than in any other part of the world, and the Japanese, with their modern affluence, have become, I think, the most educated people in the world. Before they opened in the middle of the 19th century, they probably had high levels. Forty-five percent of the men perhaps were literate and fifteen percent of the women, which is not too different from the advanced Western nations at that time. They put through a complete educational system for everybody as one of their very first reforms and today they get over 90 percent of their children through senior high school, 12 years with kindergarten before that, that is much more rigorous than anything we have in this country and is usually supplemented by things they call juku or academies. In order to do better in school after school hours, the children go to these academies to learn a little more. About the time they get through high school, they have learned about twice as much as our average high school child. They can quite easily goof off for the next four years in college, as many of them do, still be ahead of us perhaps, they've learned so much. But in any case, with

not more than 90 percent getting through this rigorous system up through senior high school, they certainly have the most educated working force in the world and are probably the most educated people in the world. And then a final point, a tremendous stress in Japanese society, on individual strength and discipline, and will power. We see them as operating in these groups; we don't see them as individuals. They are in these groups, they operate in the groups; but at the same time they put tremendous effort into their own individual strength. In fact, they see cooperation in groups as being only done well by people with great discipline themselves. You have to discipline yourself so you don't lose your temper in the group, so you do listen to the other person, so you handle these things well. This is a way you show your own great strength by being a good group cooperator. This is quite different from our ways of seeing it. They try to develop themselves as individuals by developing their own individual cultural achievements. Practically every Japanese can do something cultural you know, play a flute, or sing a song of a certain type, or do some medieval chanting, or you know, some kind of special dance, or so on it goes. In fact, you never have an entertainment, you know, except without people all showing his or her particular skill, usually his. She never gets out there. She is kept at

home. She has her skills, too, that she can maybe show off to the ladies at home. And you come to the American member of the group, who has no skill at all, maybe plays golf, but that was not quite suitable for this occasion and so he finally sings an old college song and he can't get through it. He can't remember it, and halfway through it he seems to be a man without having developed his own cultural abilities. Well, you don't just do it that way. They try to develop a strong sense of discipline. I call it the Zen sense, but Zen really is not the right term. Zen itself is a mixture of many things, its the meditation of Indian Buddhism mixed up with the Taoistic feeling for nature and all that from China that got mixed up with a similiar kind of feeling in Japan for nature and closeness to nature, and also a sense of discipline of the warrior class during Japan's feudal age. Put that whole bundle together and maybe you can call it the Zen concept of discipline. The Japanese spend tremendous hours, while we are jogging and all that, you know, and keeping our muscles up--these days we do that at least--they often are spending time in developing inner strength. The whole approach to, let's say, what we call the martial arts is an interesting thing. The martial arts--judo, fencing, and all these sorts of things, seems very physical; but the important thing to the Japanese--everybody who teaches those things--you see most of the

kids over here who take an interest in it see that very same thing. The first thing is self discipline. Unless you've got control over your belly, as they say, you can't do any of these things. Archery--well, take that one out. Well, you think archery is just: hit that target over there; well you've done it. Well, that is not it at all. Maybe you hit it out of luck, but that is not the point. The main point is first to control yourself; develop your own self-control. The Japanese put tremendous efforts into these areas in order to become strong people within themselves. Well, there you have it. A strong sense of individual achievement. Tremendous educational achievement on top of that as part of it. A great sense of self-discipline. Here you have the most shocking cultural difference between them and us as of the year 1978. And you put them in a nation that feels itself very much of a unit against the whole world and, with long traditions of cooperating together with each other and pulling together, fighting may be over points, but once they have decided it, as far as the outside world is concerned, they are going to go to it with everything together. You get all these group skills they show in the organization of their industry and relationship between government and business and all the rest of that thing, and you get this miracle--a miracle of 113 million people living on a group

of barren islands with practically no natural resources and being number three in the world. I am sure there are lots of other points, but that is all I can think of just now.

QUESTION:

Professor Reischauer, you described a sort of self-perpetuating cultural tradition. You have mentioned the mechanisms of the family and the school for imbuing traditions. Is there some kind of a caretaker establishment, a cultural establishment, that helps people remember what the proper traditions are?

Answer:

There is certainly no organization of that sort whatsoever. Every Japanese is very conscious of being Japanese, and the great fear he has in his mind is that somehow he will lose his Japaneseness. That is the least fear they should have, you know, their whole problem is that they are so extremely Japaneseian, so different from the rest of us. They have a tremendous sense of their own tradition. So it is an organization of 113 million Japanese, as it were, trying to remember this thing--many of them doing it in different ways, of course, with no specifically organized system. This is one of the beauties of the thing. If they had an organized system, I am sure one of the first things it would do would be to say, to keep our Japanese nature alive, we have got to reject all of these English words that have

flooded into the language and is turning it into the "Franglais" (or the corresponding Japanese word) in the West. There is no such organization to do that, so the strength of the Japanese language is that it is willing to take in these foreign words and keep very virile by having a great influx of outside words. So you have, I think, a much better system than if you had an organization to try to keep alive the Japanese tradition.

Question:

You talked about the strong feelings of self-reliance of the Japanese and about the feeling separateness of the Japanese on the one hand, and on the other, all others. Perhaps you could say a little about whatever countervailing influences there might be about their having to rely to such a great extent on others for their defense.

Answer:

Well, they are willing to rely on others for the defense because they have no choice. In order to catch up with the Western world they had to industrialize. To do that they developed a dependence on the resources of the world because they did not have them themselves. They have

now gotten themselves to be the most dependent, most vulnerable country in the world in the sense of depending upon the resources of the whole globe. They themselves cannot possibly defend all those things so there is no possibility of a Japanese military establishment to defend Japan's vital interest. Don't they have other defense interests? There is very little danger of anybody attacking Japan. An attack on Japan is likely to be the start of a third world war and nobody wants to start that. Still in this nuclear age it is nice to have a nuclear umbrella. Is it sensible for the Japanese to have it? No, because the nation is too narrow, too concentrated, populations too much together, to have a credible second strike capacity. They can't survive the first strike. So it is better to depend on the United States for that sort of thing. I think the situation just naturally makes it more sensible for them to depend on us for their defense and to depend on the world and world trade for their economic livelihood. Now, where I see their gravest danger is that they, in their drives, are almost beginning to upset the world trading situation; at least, you know, the reactions of the outside world are getting larger and larger to this great Japanese success. Only they can turn it down, condition it slightly; but they will have to find ways to do that and they have to see to this problem first.

Question:

How do you see the Japanese nationality or people reacting to the increasing pressures asserted by the ASEAN countries, for instance, to assume more of a leadership role in the region for economic development.

Answer:

Well, the pressures by the ASEAN countries for Japan to take more of a leadership role usually means won't you give us more money. They really do not want Japan to do that much in the way of taking leadership. I think they still have lots of worries about Japanese ability to become a great military power again, I think they are not realistic but in Southeast Asia there are still fears of that or at least memories of that. Great worries about Japan taking over economically and establishing a kind of a new economic empire when they failed to get one through military conquest so, I think, ASEAN is not really wanting Japan to be that much of a leader, but to be more generous in economic terms, in aid, and trade, and so on. I think Japan should do that, it has to do that as well as worry about the problems of its trade with us and the Europeans. Be sure that she does not build up adverse reactions that could lead us off in the

direction of restrictionism and then a stagnating world trade and lead us in that sense back, you know, to the 1920s which was the kick off point for the disasters of World War II.

Question:

One of the things you said was that the Japanese have a great ability to adapt to systems and changes fairly peacefully. One of the problems that the U.S. is having, I guess, and maybe the globe is having with the Japanese is to get them to make a commitment to the point that they are the number three economic power in the world, and that they have a global role to play economically and politically. We have never really been able to get a commitment out of the Japanese, that this is true, and given this penchant so to speak for the Japanese on the one side and the whole world on the other, is there any hope in the near future that we are going to see this type of commitment?

Answer:

Well, here is that key question because unless they do do that, I think there is real trouble ahead. But remember what they are fighting against. They are a terribly vulnerable

country and, therefore, they see the necessity of having a nice fat cushion and they wonder why we should get so excited when we are a rich country and all that. Why should we deny them their little economic cushion that they feel they ought to have being in this perilous position. They have a history of more than a hundred years in which they have been trying to catch up with the rest of the world. Starting there in the 1860s, and they did more or less catch up by the time of World War I, between then and World War II, and then blew it by doing the wrong thing at that time, and they were almost completely destroyed and had another great surge of trying to catch up. Behind that you have this long history of being outside of the world feeling themselves so separate, and on top of that, they have a language which is probably the biggest barrier of all in the world for an important country. It is not an Indo-Europe language so it is very hard for them to learn any of our Indo-European languages and vice-versa. It is a language that only the Korean, Mongol and Turkish are languages like it. So there are very few people who would find Japanese easy to learn or they (the Japanese) would find <u>their</u> languages easy to learn. They have a big communication barrier, they have this long habit of trying to catch up and feeling themselves as being under-privileged in that way. They see themselves as actually

being a lot poorer than we think they are, and they are correct, actually. They are a lot poorer than they seem. In monetary terms they are rich, but when you see what you can buy with those monetary terms in Japan, you know, space is so expensive, which makes food and everything else terribly expensive. They are a lot poorer people than they seem. This, the whole tradition, the leadership of today is a leadership that grew up under these earlier conditions of trying to catch up. For a nation like this to change its thinking is going to be awfully difficult. It is a tremendous change, because up till now they have been too successfully playing the game of waiting to see what the other guy does and then reacting in the way that will be most beneficial for Japan and forget the rest. It has worked wonderfully, so why change now? We are demanding of them a tremendous change. I was just out in Japan talking to some of the top leaders, I hadn't meant to do this but I did happen to get to speaking to the people at the very top and some of the bureaucrats in between. One of them said a very interesting thing to me, he said, "You know you are really saying the rules have changed, haven't they, once again?" He was referring to the fact that once before, when Japan militarily caught up with the rest of the world, around World War I, suddenly we said you know the rules have changed. We don't make empires any more. That was in the nineteenth century.

That was fine, the French had theirs, the British had theirs, and everybody else had their empire, and the Japanese were just too late. Then they were supposed to adapt to the idea that you didn't make empires anymore. What happened was that nationalism had made empires out of date, which the Japanese learned later on. Now we are telling them some of the same thing. We have been talking about free trade. As long as we seemed the strongest trading company just like the British before us, they were for free trade when they were the strongest. Now the Japanese are the strongest and they said, "This is great, let's have free trade"; but we said, "No, the rules have changed. You have got to hold yourself down when you are the leader. You can't really do it anymore." I said to him, "Yes, that is exactly what we are saying. You are quite right." From the Japanese point of view, this can seem very, very unfair, but the reality is that, if they don't change or make this shift, then I think we will perhaps run into some really serious problems in terms of trade. Your basic question was: Are they capable of it? There is nothing you can see now that would indicate that they are capable of it except history. The change they made between the 1850s and the 1870s was a bigger change than this one. When they realized what they had to do, they did it; and, basing myself on that, I have a feeling that

the Japanese can see the problem and, once seeing it, they can make the change and assume their position as, really, it is number two in the trading world rather than number three.

Question:

We have been hearing about a self-disciplined people. What about those rioters and demonstrators that put the rest of the world to shame? Like the Tokyo Airport. Are they a trend or are they somebody to be concerned about in the future?

Answer:

All generalities have their exceptions, and here is very obviously one. The Japanese have had a great deal of rioting especially among students. It is an old thing in Japan. It goes back to the early 1920s. Probably for much the same reasons as today. The educational system up to the university was so hard, they had to take four years of doing something else. They either played sports and climbed mountains, or else they rioted and went into politics, or did something of that sort, before they went back into business or industries and worked hard. The Japanese student

radical is an exception but he is a timely exception. You go back to 1960 during the time of the security riots of the security treaty with the United States. The Japanese student was out in the forefront of a national movement. Today he is squeezed completely off the political board. No political group will have anything to do with them at all. Actually, they have been pretty well squeezed out of Japan. Police controls in Japan are very efficient. These people can go abroad and do something. The one remaining issue that had some general public support was Narita, a bad choice to begin with, peasants who felt they had been separated from their land, you had the problems of noise pollution and things like that. The last thing the radical students could still cling on to. I think this one is going to be taken away from them and maybe even this phenomenon will then disappear completely and in any case it is not politically significant in Japan. I see our time is up.

Admiral Turner: We are very sorry we have to cut short the amount of time for questions. We are most grateful to you, thank you for being with us and stimulating us so much. (Applause)

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